

**Title II of the *Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA)*, as amended in 2008 by the *Higher Education Opportunity Act*, requires states to report annually on key elements of their teacher preparation programs and requirements for initial teacher credentialing, kindergarten through 12th grade. *Title II News You Can Use* is a series of issue briefs on key data collected through the Title II HEA data collection. This issue brief provides information on the characteristics and trends of low-performing and at-risk teacher preparation programs.**

## Low-Performing and At-Risk Teacher Preparation Programs

Over the past several years, the education field has seen a heightened policy focus on teacher quality as one of the most significant factors in increasing student achievement. This has contributed to an increased spotlight on the role of teacher preparation programs in adequately preparing teachers. Policymakers and stakeholders are scrutinizing the quality and rigor of teacher preparation programs, including the standards used to evaluate their performance (Demonte, 2015).

In some states, the assessment of teacher preparation programs occurs in multiyear cycles as part of the state approval process. In others, programs are reviewed by a specialized accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary for accreditation of professional teacher education programs, such as Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). In many states, the state approval process and program accreditation are linked.

As required by the HEA, states report annually on how they evaluate their teacher preparation programs. States

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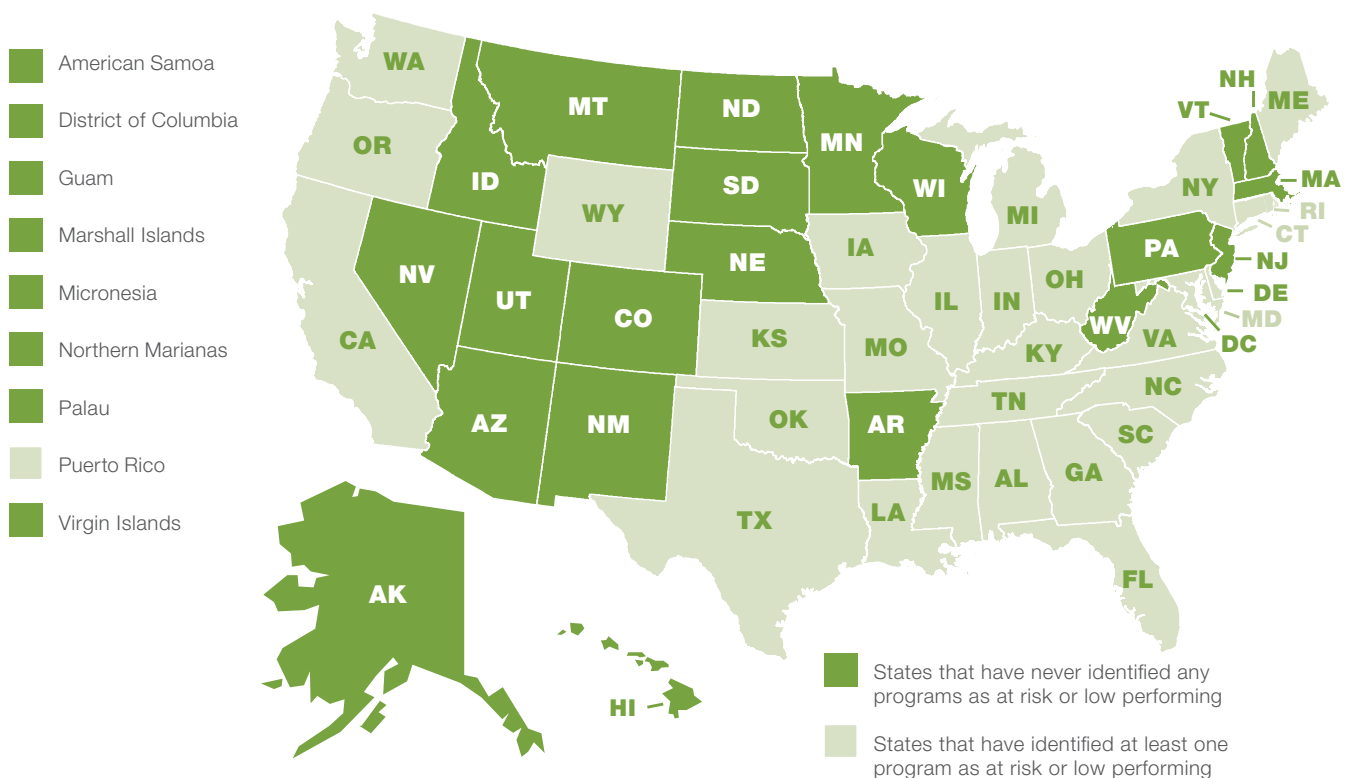
establish the criteria they use to evaluate the performance of traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs that do not meet their state's criteria may be classified by their state as "low performing" or "at risk of being identified as low performing."

However, a recent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report highlighted a general lack of oversight by some states on reviewing the performance of teacher preparation programs. The report highlighted that some states have low standards or lack of criteria for identifying teacher preparation programs as low performing, particularly alternative route programs (GAO, 2015).

## Several states have never reported having at-risk or low-performing programs

Although states are required by federal law to assess whether their teacher preparation programs are low performing, the GAO report revealed that some states failed to do so. Seven states reported to the GAO that they do not have a process in place or have not set criteria to identify teacher preparation programs as low performing (GAO, 2015). Twenty-four states, American Samoa, Guam, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau and Virgin Islands have never identified any programs as being low performing or at risk.

### States That Have Never Identified Any Programs as AR or LP



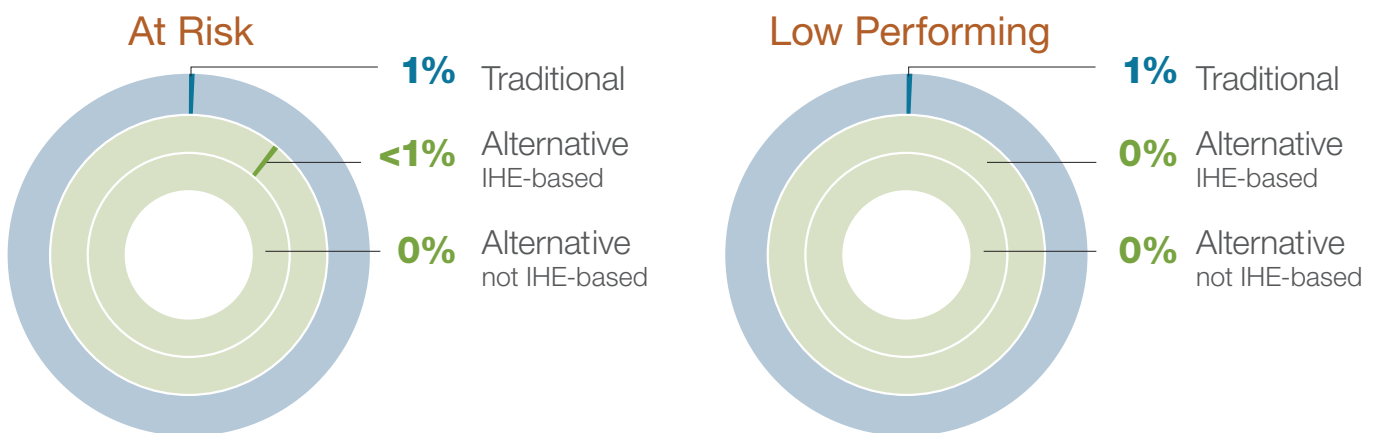
While several states have never reported having at-risk or low-performing teacher preparation programs, those that have seem slow to respond to those low-performing programs. A survey conducted by Education Week on state standards and the policies states use to review the performance of teacher preparation programs revealed that there is a lack of consequences for teacher preparation programs that fail to meet state standards, as states seem reluctant to intervene or close low-performing programs (Sawchuk, 2014).

## Fewer than 3 percent of programs nationwide are identified as at risk or low performing

Teacher preparation programs that states identified as low performing or at risk accounted for a very small proportion—less than 3 percent—of the 2,170 programs that prepare teachers. Of the 1,497 traditional teacher preparation programs, 22 programs (1 percent) were identified as at risk, and 21 programs (1 percent) were identified as

low performing. Of the 472 alternative teacher preparation programs based at institutions of higher education (IHEs), 2 programs (less than 1 percent) were identified as at risk, and none was identified as low performing. None of the 201 alternative teacher preparation programs based outside of IHEs were identified as at risk or low performing.

### AR & LP Providers by Program Type



The GAO report highlighted the ramifications resulting from a lack of procedures and criteria for identifying programs as low performing (GAO, 2015). Without the ability to identify programs that are most in need of program improvement, states cannot provide appropriate levels of technical assistance to drive continuous improvement. In a statement responding to the GAO report, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) also stressed the need to collect data that can drive reform and continuous improvement. AACTE advocates for legislation that would make *HEA* and *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* funding contingent on state compliance with holding teacher preparation programs accountable (Koolbeck, 2015).

## The number of at-risk and low-performing programs fluctuates from year to year

The number of low-performing or at-risk teacher preparation programs reported by states has fluctuated since 2005, ranging from a low of 16 programs in 2005 to a high of 55 programs in 2013. The number of at-risk teacher preparation programs has ranged from a low of 12 programs in 2005 to a high of 34 programs in 2012. The number of low-performing teacher preparation programs has ranged from a low of 4 programs in 2005 to a high of 23 programs in 2013.

### Number of At-Risk and Low-Performing Teacher Preparation Programs Reported by States: 2005 Through 2014



## References

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## Data Notes

Unless otherwise noted, the data in this issue brief reflect AY 2012–13 data reported through Title II *HEA* by all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands.

For more information, go to [title2.ed.gov](http://title2.ed.gov).



Data as of July 17, 2015.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. *Higher Education Act Title II Reporting System* (2015).